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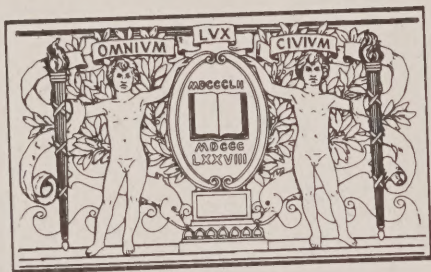
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REPORT SUMMARY

A 1978 Environmental Review Survey
of the South End

Conducted for
Boston Redevelopment Authority


October 1978

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this survey research project was to provide the Boston Redevelopment Authority with a comprehensive and statistically reliable profile of the South End, expressed in terms of the demographic characteristics, perceptions and attitudes of South End residents toward their city in general and their neighborhood in particular.

The ultimate purpose of the project was to review the impact of past South End redevelopment efforts, to generate guidelines for completing current redevelopment programs in the South End, and to provide directions for future B.R.A. efforts in that community.

In line with these objectives, CONSENSUS conducted a personal in-home interview survey among a statistically representative cross-section of the South End population. On the basis of area probability random sampling techniques, in which every household in the South End had a known chance of being selected for participation in the study, a total of one thousand eight (1,008) interviews was completed during the period of June 28 through July 28, 1978.



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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Compared to 8% of South End households that include persons sixty-five years or older, 18% include children age six to sixteen---and 8% include children under six years of age.
2. One in three (33%) South End residents is married, compared to 15% who are divorced, 9% widowed, and 42% single.
3. In an estimated 27% of South End households, there are persons attending school---including 16% attending public elementary or high school, 3% attending private or parochial elementary or high school, and 6% attending college.
4. Approximately 39% of South End households include persons who have attended college, compared to 21% who are high school graduates, and 32% with less than a high school education.

5. Unemployment is significantly higher in Black and Hispanic households than for the average of all households in the South End. Compared to 8% of all adults unemployed and seeking jobs, a high 13% of Black residents in the South End are unemployed and seeking jobs---14% among Hispanic residents.

6. Only 27% of employed residents of the South End hold jobs in the neighborhood. Most of those residents (72%) walk to work, with 12% driving an automobile to their jobs in the South End, and 11% using public transportation.

Among the more than two-thirds (70%) of South End residents employed outside the neighborhood, 38% rely on public transportation to get to work, and 34% drive automobiles, or walk (20%).

7. Approximately 18% of employed South End residents are in the business and professional occupation category--- compared to 41% white collar workers, and 29% blue collar workers.

8. One in six (17%) South End residents live in single family houses, compared to 75% living in apartments, and 7% in other types of housing units.

9. Close to one in four (22%) of South End households own their homes, with two out of three homeowners (68%) paying off a mortgage vs. 27% who own their homes free and clear. Home ownership is at the 12% level of Black families in the South End, and less than 1% among Hispanic households.
10. Among the approximately 69% of South End households who rent their residences, one in three (32%) report receiving some form of government rent subsidy or housing assistance.
11. A high proportion of households (55%) currently renting residences in the South End approve of the idea of owning a residence in that neighborhood, compared to 34% who would prefer to purchase a residence in some other location--- and 11% undecided.

Most renters who would like to own a home in the South End base their preference on the people in the neighborhood, convenience to work or shopping, quiet peaceful neighborhood, or the fact that they have always lived there.

Those who would prefer to own a residence elsewhere would rather live in a rural or suburban area, complain about the high cost of living in the South End, or see the neighborhood deteriorating.

12. About one in three (31%) South End households plan to change residences during the next five years---compared to 50% with no plans to move, and 19% uncertain as to their residential plans for the future. More than half (56%) of those who plan to move during the next five years see themselves relocating outside the South End, compared to only 27% moving to another residence in the South End, and 18% undecided. Those preferring to move outside the South End lean toward moving away from Boston altogether (47%), compared to 26% choosing another section of the city, and 15% favoring the Boston suburbs.
13. All things considered, South End residents are most likely to mention convenience to jobs, shopping and recreation/entertainment, the friendliness of the people, and the diversity of backgrounds and ethnic groups as the features they like most about living in their neighborhood. Complaints about living in the South End center around crime problems, garbage/unclean streets, and street noise.

14. Most South End residents are extremely optimistic about the future of their neighborhood, and the immediate block area in which they live. Nearly three out of four residents (73%) feel that the South End will improve during the next five years, and 70% express the opinion that the immediate area surrounding their residence will improve as well.

Only the fear of increasing crime problems, complaints about unclean streets, and the effects of too much rehabilitation that forces low income families out of the neighborhood---represent possible sources of pessimism among South End residents today.

15. About half (49%) of South End residents report significant familiarity with SEPAC, compared to 31% measurable recognition of the South End Historical Society, and 6% for POSSE. Among those familiar with each of these South End resident organizations, less than 5% reported regular attendance or participation in organization activities.

16. Most residents rely on the word-of-mouth, broadcast and print news media for information about the South End and their immediate neighborhood. However, significant proportions (17%) indicate readership of the SEPAC newsletter or other organizational news sources (11%).
17. About 37% of South End residents are aware that the City of Boston must complete the urban renewal project in the South End.
18. Significant proportions of the South End population would like to see more off-street parking on vacant land in their neighborhood (65%); day care facilities (57%); large parks and athletic fields (60%); small parks/tot lots (70%); supermarkets (68%); youth centers (66%); senior citizen housing (69%); community centers (61%); low and moderate income housing (66%); medical/dental facilities (61%) and victory gardens (62%)---and fewer halfway houses, vacant abandoned buildings, bars/liquor stores, and alcoholics/derelicts on the streets.

19. The vast majority of South End residents (78%) would like to see a continuation of special urban renewal projects in their neighborhood---primarily because the programs and funds are needed to upgrade housing in the neighborhood, and that task is not yet complete.
20. Most South End residents rate the neighborhood's shopping facilities as below average (48%), or at best average (39%)---with only 12% registering satisfaction with the quality of shopping in the area.

Residents report frequent patronizing of grocery and drug outlets, laundries/dry cleaners, hardware stores and liquor stores in the South End---but relatively little shopping for clothing, gifts, antiques, or plants/flowers---or patronizing of restaurants and beauty shops in the neighborhood.

South End retail outlets are often criticized for having prices that are too high for the average resident, limited merchandise selection, unclean/shabby stores, and poor quality goods.

21. A majority of South End residents would support any of a wide range of programs aimed at improving the quality of life in their neighborhood---with rehabilitation of existing housing topping the list and generating greater support than the construction of new housing in the neighborhood.

	<u>WOULD SUPPORT</u>
	<u>%</u>
Rehabilitation of Existing Housing	91
Job Development for South Enders	90
More Police Protection	89
New Street Pavement/Sidewalks	84
Additional Park and Recreation Space	77
Historical Preservation	75
Additional Street Lighting	75
Water and Sewer Improvement	74
More Social Services	68
Strict Enforcement of Parking Regulations	63
More Subsidized Housing	63
Construction of New Housing	62
More Public Transportation	59

22. Faced with the selection of which programs are most vs. least important, South End residents demonstrate significant differentiation---clustering increased police protection, rehabilitation of existing housing and job development in the top importance category---followed by more pavement and sidewalk improvements, park/recreational space, street lighting, social services and subsidized housing in the secondary importance category. Relatively little importance is assigned to programs for more public transportation, enforcement of parking regulations, construction of new housing, historical preservation or water/sewer improvement.

	<u>MOST</u> <u>IMPORTANT</u>	<u>LEAST</u> <u>IMPORTANT</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
More Police Protection	57	6
Rehabilitation of Existing Housing	49	3
Job Development for South Enders	44	4
Additional Street Lighting	22	21
New Pavement/Sidewalks	21	14
More Subsidized Housing	21	18
Additional Park and Recreation Space	20	15
More Social Services	18	18
Construction of New Housing	14	23
Water and Sewer Improvement	12	20
Historical Preservation	11	22
Strict Enforcement of Parking Regulations	10	28
More Public Transportation	9	33

